

DURHAM



CITY OF DURHAM

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CITY OF MEDICINE

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Bo Ferguson, Deputy City Manager
From: Jose L. Lopez, Sr., Chief of Police
Date: May 19, 2015
RE: **Execute a Contract for a Total Amount Not to Exceed \$79,760 for Psychological Services for Police Employees**

Executive Summary

The Police Department requires comprehensive psychological services to assist the Department in critical incident response and debriefings, counseling therapy and crisis intervention for employees involved in traumatic events, individual counseling, fitness-for-duty evaluations, selecting the most suitable officers for specialized assignments, stress management or other training as needed, and evaluating and maintaining the mental health of its employees.

Recommendations

That City Council authorize the City Manager to execute a three-year contract in the total amount of \$79,760 with Law Enforcement Services Group, PLLC, d/b/a The FMRT Group for psychological services (RFP: Police Psychological Services).

Background

The inherent stresses with police work require specialized psychological services. Since the Police Department does not have the internal resources to provide these services, external consultant services are necessary.

A critical incident in which an officer is hurt or killed, or causes death or serious injury, can cause post-traumatic stress. Post-traumatic stress can affect the officer(s) or employees involved, but may also affect family and co-workers. Stress can have an adverse psychological impact on the ability to function as effective employees and may affect employees both personally and professionally. Professional intervention is very important in order to moderate the effects of post-traumatic stress. In addition to the mental health benefits provided by health insurance and the City's Employee Assistance Program, police employees may need individual counseling that is specific to the special stresses of police work.

When work performance suffers and the supervisors or the administration can demonstrate reasonable cause to suspect the employee is in need of psychological assistance, a fitness-for-duty evaluation is requested. A fitness-for-duty evaluation can help the psychologist/psychiatrist determine whether the employees can perform the essential functions of their jobs and whether psychological services are needed to help them regain the ability to function in law enforcement. The Police Department has specialized assignments and teams, such as Selective

Enforcement, where officers are especially at risk for life-threatening situations, for themselves and others. Prior to assignment in one of these teams, evaluations are performed to determine the suitability of interested officers.

Professional psychological training presentations may be needed to assist department trainers with stress or other psychology-related topics. In addition, there are other situations where the department may benefit from the expertise of a professional psychologist/psychiatrist or there may be other activities as authorized by the Chief of Police, for the benefit of the department or the benefit of the psychologist/psychiatrist in understanding or assisting the department.

The psychologist/psychiatrist will follow all legal guidelines, such as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Health Insurance Portability and Information Act (HIPAA), as well as comply with the accreditation standards outlined by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA).

One firm responded to the Request for Proposals (RFP). The Proposal Evaluation Committee recommended our current vendor Law Enforcement Services Group, d/b/a The FMRT Group for this contract because of their greater length and breadth of experience, larger staff, and extra services.

Issues/Analysis

Police departments that do not provide immediate intervention after critical incidents are subject to significantly higher turnover, stress-related complaints, absenteeism, inappropriate behaviors, increased liability, and other negative repercussions. In contrast, the Department has utilized the psychological services available in previous years to good effect, and has lost few officers to stress-related complaints. Providing individual counseling, stress reduction and other training, evaluating officers before assignment to Selective Enforcement and similar specialized teams, and requiring fitness-for-duty examinations as needed have helped maintain the mental health of police employees.

Alternatives

Alternatives to contracting for psychological services would be to hire an internal psychologist or eliminate psychological services. An internal psychologist, which the Department has utilized in the past, was considerably more expensive due to salary, benefits, office space, equipment, and other costs. Eliminating pre-employment psychological services testing would increase police turnover and departmental liability to a considerable degree, and be a safety risk to both employees and citizens.

Financial Impact

The funding of \$26,587 per year, over three years, not to exceed a total of \$79,760, will be provided in the Department's general fund budget. This funding will affect three consecutive years beginning with FY2015-16.

SDBE Summary

The Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance Department reviewed the proposal submitted by The FMRT Group of Winston-Salem, North Carolina and have determined that they are in compliance with the Ordinance to Promote Equal Business Opportunities in City Contracting.

SDBE REQUIREMENTS

No MSDBE or WSDBE goals were set.

WORKFORCE STATISTICS

Workforce statistics for The FMRT Group are as follows:

Total Workforce	36	
Total Females	27	(75%)
Total Males	9	(25%)
Black Males	0	(0%)
White Males	8	(22%)
Other Males	1	(3%)
Black Females	1	(3%)
White Females	26	(72%)
Other Females	0	(0%)